(c) by when the auction will be made;

(d) whether there is a huge backlog of drilling work from previous auctions; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) There is no time schedule fixed for launch of seventh round of New Exploration licensing Policy (NELP-VII). The necessary preparatory work before launch of NELP.VII *viz.* finalization of Notice Inviting Offer(NIO), Bid Evaluation Criteria (BEC) and Model Production Sharing Contract (MPSC) are in progress. The inter-ministerial consultations for obtaining clearance before launch of NELP-VII have not yet been completed.

(d) and (e) In offshore and deepwater areas, there is a delay in drilling commitments due to offshore drilling rig scarcity worldwide.

As far as commitment of drilling in NELP is concerned, in first three rounds of NELP, 76 wells have been drilled up to March 2007 against the commitment of 96 wells. Blocks awarded in further rounds of biddings *i.e.* NELP-IV, NELP-V and NELP-VI are presently under phase-I which is mainly seismic data acquisition stage.

Transfer of customers from one LPG distributor to other

1018. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the policy of Government in transferring customers from one distributor to another (L.P. Gas Agencies) in the name of restructuring;

(b) the details of such transfers in the Ahmedabd Territory by IOC during 2006;

(c) whether he has received any representation protesting such transfers; and

(d) if so, the actions taken on such representations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) Government had reviewed the policy on transfer of LPG customers in November, 2004 and conveyed to the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) to stop inter-company transfers of customers as it was found that the practice of transferring customers from the established LPG distributorships to newly commissioned distributors had led to a general sense of complacency among the new distributors. The new policy aims at encouraging all distributorships to explore new and less covered areas to expand their market share as almost all the urban markets are at their saturation level.

However, restructuring of distributorship by transfer of customers from one distributorship to another intra company is carried out periodically to improve upon the customer service and to optimize logistics in order to avoid cross delivery in various areas as per extant policy guidelines of the OMCs.

(b) Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC) has advised for inter-distributorship transfer of 15,000 customers in Ahmedabad market during 2006-07, out of which 11,638 customers have already been transferred to the respective distributors.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. A representation was received against transfer of 4000 customers from M/s Ambica Gas Service, Ahmedabad. The matter was examined in consultation with IOC and it was ascertained that the distributorship was operating at 115% of the refill ceiling limits. Even after transfer of customers, the subject distributorship would be operating at nearly 100% of the ceiling limit of 12000 refills per month.

Crude oil demand and production

1019. DR. V. MAITREYAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the annual demand and production of crude oil in the country;

(b) the total quantity of crude imported in the country both quantity and value-wise;

(c) the total outflow of foreign exchange due to these imports; and

(d) what are the immediate steps, being taken to increase indigenous production of crude in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) The crude oil demand in the year 2006-07 was 141.463 MMT, and the crude oil production in the country during 2006-07 was 31.513 MMT.

(b) Crude oil imports in the year 2006-07 was 111.502 MMT valued at Rs. 219,029 crore.

(c) The foreign exchange for crude oil imports in the year 2006-07 was US$ 48.389 million.

(d) Various measures are being taken to substantially accelerate exploration activities for enhancing domestic oil and gas production which include the following:

(i) Carving out more and more areas for exploration for offer under various rounds of NELP.

(ii) Quicker development of discovered reserves for enabling commencement of production.

(iii) Use of stimulation techniques for increasing production from existing fields.

(iv) Application of Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR)/Improved Oil Recovery (IOR) techniques for increasing recovery factor from existing fields.

(v) Arresting decline from ageing fields.

(vi) Acquisition of exploration acreages and producing properties overseas to bring in equity oil.

(vii) Substitution of oil through use of non-conventional source of energy such as bio-diesel, ethanol, etc.